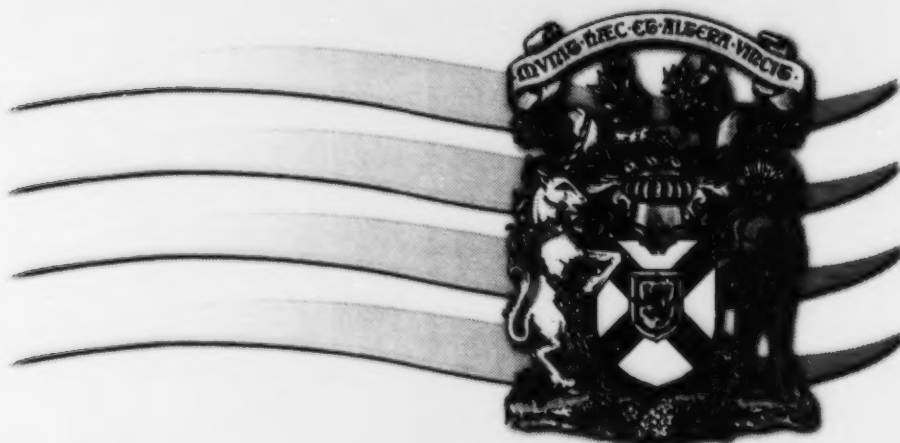


Charting the Course

*Suggestions for Reform from Across
the Nova Scotia Public Service*



PROVINCE OF NOVA SCOTIA

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For further information about *Charting the Course:
Suggestions for Reform from Across the Nova Scotia
Public Service*, please contact

Government of Nova Scotia
PO Box 1617
Halifax, Nova Scotia
Canada B3J 2Y3
Telephone: (902) 424-8910
Fax: (902) 424-7638
E-mail: ProgramAnalysis@gov.ns.ca

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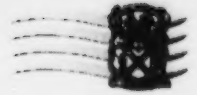


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Charting the Course



Introduction

Nova Scotians cherish their past and their traditions, but last summer they told their government very decisively that they were ready for massive change in the way government conducts its business. They were impatient with programs and services that were burdened with a costly administrative infrastructure. They wanted more openness and accountability in the way government spent tax dollars. They wanted a government that was fair to all regions and people of the province.

Within weeks of taking office, the new government began responding to these concerns. A Task Force on Fiscal Management, spearheaded by Voluntary Planning, heard from over 800 Nova Scotians who were anxious to contribute their ideas and suggestions for system and policy reform. When the task force reported in late January 2000, it presented government with 29 recommendations to make the system more efficient. The majority of those recommendations have already been approved for implementation.

The budget that was tabled in the fall of 1999 signalled very clearly that major change and difficult decisions would be necessary in the coming years if we were to free Nova Scotians from the massive debt burden that was

threatening to engulf us and jeopardize the future of coming generations. In response to these challenges, government undertook the first comprehensive analysis of programs and services that has ever been completed in the province (the Program Analysis and Options Exercise). For the first time, government is able to determine precisely where its funds are being expended and to begin calculating the true costs, including the cost of administrative support.

At the same time, government launched a major system restructuring of its services and agencies outlined in *The Course Ahead*, which was released in March 2000. This document also presented government's service goals and its commitment to improved public accountability. Most importantly, *The Course Ahead* articulated four key principles to serve as the cornerstones for future decision making:

- commitment to quality service
- focus on fairness to regions and people
- value for money in spending
- improved accountability for tax dollars

But it takes more than captains and admirals to navigate the fleet safely to port. From the outset, government recognized that those on the front lines often had a more practical

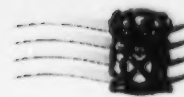
How We Gathered Suggestions

perspective than those in head office. Too often in the past, good ideas and suggestions from on-the-ground service providers have been stifled. Many employees have been frustrated by their inability to contribute to meaningful change, and many were understandably reluctant to participate in any process where they did not have meaningful input.

Government was determined to overcome these concerns and to provide everyone within the public service the opportunity to contribute their ideas and suggestions as freely and openly as they wished. The response was overwhelming: whether from a transportation garage in Halifax County or an Access Nova Scotia Centre in Sydney, employees had lots of ideas to contribute. This report, *Charting the Course: Suggestions for Reform from Across the Nova Scotia Public Service*, contains the many suggestions and ideas that public servants have contributed to the change process. All are being reviewed by the appropriate departments, and their progress will be tracked in the new accountability framework document, *Charting the Course: Where We've Been*, which will be published in October.

As soon as government announced its Program Analysis and Options Exercise, the Deputy Minister of Priorities and Planning wrote to all public servants indicating that the process was under way and inviting employees to send specific ideas and suggestions directly to her. Over 100 suggestions were received in response.

At the same time, Priorities and Planning established an Intranet website where public servants could share ideas, make suggestions, and ask questions about coming changes. Since its inception in late October, this site has had hundreds of visitors and has received many wide-ranging suggestions for reform and cost cutting. A unique feature of this site was anonymity: no employee was compelled to reveal his or her identity to ask questions, provide recommendations or participate in conversations. This electronic discussion forum continues to operate. To date, there have been discussions on over 140 topics relating to both program analysis and government restructuring. Individual departments have been directed to monitor and respond to issues raised in the forum.



Charting the Course

Not all public servants have access to, or are comfortable with, electronic communication. For this reason, deputy ministers wrote directly to their own staff, soliciting recommendations and ideas. Responses indicated that public servants had much to share about how the system should be repositioned to meet both the fiscal and the policy changes facing us.

Whenever possible, suggestions that could be immediately implemented were noted and fast-tracked so that some of these efficiencies could be reflected in budget preparation for 2000-01. In an effort to demonstrate the government's earnest intent to listen to employee ideas and concerns, a sampling of employee suggestions was posted on the Intranet site along with the action government was taking as a result of the suggestion. Given the timing demands of the budget process, however, it will be more realistic to see the impact of the employee suggestion process reflected in subsequent budget years.

Note: As a courtesy to our employees the material contained within this report has already been posted on the website for everyone to review and arrangements have been made to provide hard copies to those offices where employees cannot currently access the e-mail system.

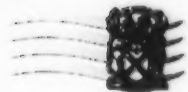
What Our Employees Told Us

Our employees' suggestions and recommendations for reform may be found in Appendix A. A careful review of those suggestions reveals a deep and enduring interest in the reform and restructuring of government in Nova Scotia by civil servants at every level. Many of the recommendations are structural in nature, and these issues will be dealt with during the restructuring process announced in *The Course Ahead*. For this reason, the employee suggestions have been organized into categories reflecting where they will reside under the new government structure that will be in place when the results are reported in *Charting the Course: Where We've Been*.

Next Steps

No less than the general public, Nova Scotia public servants have been wanting significant change for some time, and this report highlights the value of the experience and perspective they collectively bring to the process of reform and government restructuring.

Some of these recommendations were considered for implementation throughout the Program Analysis and Options process and have been integrated into some of the decisions that have been made. For the many remaining recommendations and suggestions, each department will be required to provide a response and implementation plan for those ideas that have yet to be acted upon. The departments will be required to identify how each recommendation implemented falls under the four cornerstones of Quality of Service, Fairness to Regions and People, Value for Money, and Improved Accountability. A full report and accounting on the status of these outstanding items will be made available to the public in October.



Conclusion

Collecting employee input for *Suggestions for Reform* was an instructive and humbling process. In the end we received many constructive suggestions that will help government move ahead on its agenda to provide Nova Scotians with better services and supports as efficiently as possible. Thanks go out to those who participated and provided such thoughtful lists of suggestions for us to consider.

This government is committed to making profound change, and there is no denying that reforms of this magnitude can be difficult. On the open seas, charting a true course requires good navigational skills, reliable tools, and the ability to concentrate in the face of many distractions. This government is determined to chart just such a precise course for Nova Scotia. Linking these four major strategic initiatives—the Voluntary Planning Task Force on Fiscal Management, the restructuring outlined in *The Course Ahead*, the detailed program information resulting from the Program Analysis and Options Exercise, and the many suggestions contained in this report—is designed to help our province reach a safe harbour as soon as possible.

Reaching this haven of fiscal health is the only way we can build the Nova Scotia that our citizens want and deserve.

Undoubtedly, we face many distractions as we set sail on the course ahead. What is clear, however, is that for the first time in decades our province has a vision for the future, a set of goals to help us achieve that vision, the beginnings of a new structure to implement those goals, and an accountability framework to measure our performance and progress.

Employee Suggestions and Recommendations

Department of Agriculture and Fisheries

Theme	Recommendation
4-H programs *	1. Should be driven by volunteers. 2. Keep 4-H program: recruiting ground for young people to enter agriculture industry, develops leadership in the industry.
Analytical services	1. Privatize. 2. Full cost recovery. 3. One service for entire Atlantic region.
Agricultural reps and offices	Regionalize the service and offices.
Farm Loan Board	Roll into Canada Farm Credit.
Growers and production specialists	1. Growers should be on same financial footing, receive same support as in other provinces. 2. Number of production specialist positions should not be cut, because it increases the number of commodities they need to cover and decreases their effectiveness. 3. Production specialists' expenses should not be so restrictive that they can't effectively do their jobs.
Hog industry	Continue the \$7 per pig support. If dropped may also cause packers to drop their funding.
Agricultural rep services	Service reps should be without county or municipal boundaries—go wherever they are needed. Field offices should have a budget for supplies, rentals, etc.
Public consultation	On the direction and services provided by the department.

* indicates more than one submission

Theme	Recommendation
Food safety testing lab	Reduce registered producer discounts or do full cost recovery.
Livestock Health Services Program	Restrict to registered producers—could save \$200,000.
Herd Health Program for dairy producers	Eliminate to save \$100,000.
Meat inspection	Set minimum numbers before services are provided and penalize slaughter facilities that are wasting inspection time.
Expanded hours through flex time	Offer flex time to professional and technical staff in priority areas so that hours of availability can be expanded. Priorities can be determined through public consultation.
Merge departments	Merge Agriculture with Fisheries and Natural Resources.
Cooperation agreement on boat building	Fisheries does all of the work (contracts, committee meetings, cheques, ensuring project completion), and NSED duplicates much of it.
Aquaculture lease fees	Should be increased and based on a sliding scale directly linked to a percentage of gross sales.
Aquaculture and inspection licensing systems	Consolidate.
Management	1. Too many generals, not enough soldiers. 2. Must be more accountable. 3. Delegate budget and responsibility for major expenses, office supplies and cell phone accounts, etc. to the employees. 4. Lack of trust between management and staff and across services and divisions hurts productivity and damages credibility with the public.
DFA, DNR, AGR&M	Consolidate their enforcement sections.
Fisheries schools	Consolidate with other learning institutions.
Processor and buyer licences	Brings in revenue but does not benefit industry. Lift the moratorium on licences to reduce the bureaucracy.

Theme	Recommendation
Enforcement	Focus on areas important to the industry and the province and we can make a difference. Inland fisheries, rockweed harvesting, buying and selling illegally caught fish, etc.
Vessel inspections	The two vessel inspectors should do the annual inspection on all provincially owned vessels (ferries, etc.) for a small fee.
Value of CSU	Most hiring activities (job description, ratings, interview, etc.) are done in the department. CSU just rubber stamps appointment. Purchasing activities are also done in the department. The CSU just pays the bill. Cut out the middle man.
Revert to three lines of defence in agriculture	1. Investments in industries rather than individual operations 2. Programs like crop insurance and NISA. 3. Disaster relief.
Privatize	Consider services such as ROP and water and feed testing.
Veterinary Services Section	Maintain budget—complements private practitioner services and is an integral part of livestock industry infrastructure.
Soils Lab and Production Technology	Increase cooperation between the two. Streamline services.
NSAC	Separate from the department.
Analytical and Dairy Section	Provides affordable testing service where otherwise users might not be able to afford them. This promotes informed decision making and impacts directly on economic well-being of the industry.

Department of Economic Development

Theme	Recommendation
Internal operations	• Publish goals (for example, jobs creation targets) on walls to encourage staff and show visitors that the department is focused on results. • Establish internal R&D fund to encourage innovation. Individuals or divisions can make proposals. • Create temporary work space for teams. Use teams for special projects. • Make use of an Intranet for communications/publishing throughout the department. • Strategic services should gather information to support senior management decision making. • Reduce duplication of support services—library, policy, communications, MIS. • Develop a database of entrepreneurship business ideas, import substitution, investment and trade opportunities for use by agencies around the province. • Establish a formal "knowledge economy" newsletter."
Cape Breton considerations	• Establish industrial CB voice at Cabinet. • Redeploy IT government services to CB. • Under the Youth Secretariat, supported by CAYAC, resource the Eastern Region Child and Youth services Project to deal with the effects of economic depression on children and their families. • Appoint an Economic Recovery Secretariat Think Tank under CBCEDA to develop a long-term economic development program. • Reaffirm the commitment to the School Capital Construction and Renovation program to maintain construction activity. • Improve infrastructure by making use of existing or new agreements with federal government departments such as: – National Transportation Agreement—Fleur-de-lis Trail – Devco—graduated service pensions – Construction of new Marconi Campus with help of Industry Canada.

Department of Education

Theme	Recommendation
Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority (APSEA) *	1. Does not effectively meet career training needs of deaf population. Deaf unemployment rate is 37.5%. Replace with school or resource centre with deaf-focused practices, philosophies, policies. The centre/school must be totally deaf-friendly and family-of-deaf friendly. 2. Rationalize to redirect more money to support special education by school boards by moving off-campus services under school board control.
Public education programs	Work with voluntary and charitable sector to identify and deliver to target groups. Examples: consumer education, nutrition planning, family life skills, driver safety, well person's education (including the aging process).
Trade Mart library	Merge with the Provincial Library.
Document publishing	Publish on website, charge for print copies.
Docutech	Drop contract.
CACE	Eliminate staff funding for CACE and cap costs.
Marketing services	On full cost recovery.
Merge services	Merge labour market and career related services in Policy, Training and Financial Assistance, etc.
Labour Market Development Secretariat	Eliminate.
Youth Secretariat	Merge into Training and Financial Assistance Branch.
Non-program administrative services staff	Reduce.
Eliminate services *	1. Non-public school services such as adult education. 2. Non-teacher noon hour supervision.
Course options	Reduce course options at high school and specialist teachers at elementary.

* Indicates more than one submission

Theme	Recommendation
PD costs *	1. Decrease PD requiring substitute teachers (maximize school year for teachers and potentially reserve a week at start for PD). 2. Move to 200-day year for teachers, reducing PD costs—contract/legislation implications.
Contracts *	1. Twelve-month contracts for school board office staff and principals (rather than 10). 2. Contract SLP, psychological services, etc., outside education—contract issues.
Shared services	Require boards to share services with each other and municipalities.
Split shift	Move more schools to split shift or year-round models.
Department takeover of school board duties	1. Program implementation and PD. 2. Payroll and purchasing services. 3. Central purchasing for textbooks and materials.
Regional school councils	Instead of school boards. Superintendents appointed by Minister and regional staff report to department. Make management salaries consistent with government.
Teacher college model	Introduce Teacher college model and break certification link to automatic salary increase.
Merge French institutions	Merge Université Sainte-Anne, Collège de l'Acadie, and Conseil Scolaire Acadien.
Governance	Department should have governance over finances, operations and programs of schools.
Electronic education	Have government service providers track Internet and other literacy levels and deliver service through the channels consistent with the findings.
Craft courses	Why is the government offering courses such as the craft courses offered by the Centre for Craft and Design, when they are already being offered by Halifax Continuing Education?

* Indicates more than one submission

Theme	Recommendation
School design	Avoid extravagant items in the <i>School Design Requirements Manual</i> such as ceramic tile, outdoor eating areas, cove lighting.
Cape Breton issues	1. Establish a centre of excellence in Cape Breton dedicated to lifelong learning, utilizing existing facilities and expertise at local universities and colleges. 2. Establish a research and development centre in conjunction with the centre of excellence to attract skilled individuals, students and businesses to the community. 3. Determine, with leaders in education and business, the short- and long-term educational requirements for current work force and future students. Design programs accordingly and make them available in classrooms, electronically and through distance education.
Student loans	Minimum 70 point average which must be maintained. Bursaries for students who pursue studies in areas deemed to be necessary to meet current and long-range provincial needs.
Privatize	The entire education system. A model exists in the US Midwest.
Volunteers for public education	Work with volunteers and charities to identify target groups and deliver education programs such as consumer education, nutrition and family life skills.
Indoor air quality in schools	Departments of Health and Education should collaborate to provide public education about realistic risks associated with indoor air quality problems such as molds and gases. Dispel public hysteria on these issues.
Early retirement for teachers	Program for those who were 50 years old in 1997/98 but didn't qualify for ERIP.
Regional school boards	Perform internal audit of mandate, operations, and organization of the boards. Maintain their operating budgets.
Strait Region	All three projects—Fanning, Wycocomagh, and Chedabucto Place—must go ahead or there will be political repercussions.
School board funding stabilization	For Strait and Cape Breton-Victoria, which are undergoing major enrolment decline.
Deferred maintenance	Develop comprehensive plan to clear backlog of maintenance to schools.

Department of Environment, Labour, and Regulatory Affairs

Theme	Recommendation
Permits/Fees	1. Charge appropriate fees for service 2. Charge for requests for well log / water chemistry information. 3. Review existing fee system
Decentralize Halifax Office	Transfer positions to regions to cut travel costs.
Advertising Revenue	Allow for private advertising on website and government buildings/vehicles

Department of Finance

Theme	Recommendation
SAP analysts	Why are there so many for one system?
Banking operations	Examine and analyse banking activities/consolidation/banking contracts.
Shift environments	Shift from a total "service" environment to a "service with cost/benefit analysis, good decision making and accountability" environment.
Internal courses	Offer courses in time management, decision making and cost/benefit analysis.
Bad debts	Forgiveness of bad debts to corporations: more accountability needed.
Economic forecasting	To reduce time and save resources construct one integrated (instead of the present multiple) economic forecasting model to produce the baseline forecast in a timely manner. This would free up staff for other tasks.
Central agency for economic impact studies	The Economic Policy and Analysis Division is frequently called upon to do economic impact studies and has become the formal agency for doing so. Why not have a central agency with the resources to conduct these studies for departments and perhaps charge a user fee.
Re-billing to departments	This is a time-consuming process for all affected departments. Put the budget in the appropriate department instead.
Data centre	Move the Finance data centre to Young Street.

Theme	Recommendation
Payroll services	If it is being proposed that payroll advances only be given out on an exception basis, then this should be examined carefully.
Advertising space	Rent out blank wall space inside and outside government buildings as advertising space.
SAP accounting system—cheque system is obsolete	System must be audited to avoid mistakes such as making payments twice, double billing, etc.

Department of Health

Theme	Recommendation
Medical helicopter	Re-evaluate its use. Use only for life-threatening illness.
User fees	Modest per visit user fee—ex., \$5—to discourage over-use.
Priorities	Emphasize prevention over acute care.
Nursing home care	Pay/subsidize relatives to provide care for elderly where possible. Less expensive than institutional care.
Nurse practitioners	Expand their roles.
Alternatives to acute care	Review and make changes to hospital-in-the-home.
Streamline clinical services	A two-day workshop to plan.
Children's services and continuing care	Departments of Health and Human Services programs should be integrated.
Elective surgery	Review best practices used in other jurisdictions.
Devolution and integrated service delivery systems	Proceed further with these.
Health library services	Encourage increased use of on-line electronic library.
Physician remuneration	Implement a blended formula—including salary, fees for some services, etc.

Department of Human Services

Theme	Recommendation
Workfare	Review the positive aspects. Do not fear negative public response.

Department of Justice

Theme	Recommendation
Family Violence Prevention Initiative *	1. Eliminate the office. 2. Contract out the FVPI activities that are well established (Awareness Week activities, publishing, training). The FVPI receives more than any of the Regional Victims' Services Offices.
CPR/first aid training*	1. Use department trainers for CPR, first aid, etc., instead of external. 2. Stop paying for recertification of employees in correctional facilities. Too expensive—time off, travel, books, cost of internal trainers, etc.
Bar fees	Require departmental lawyers to pay their own bar association fees.
Meals	Charge correctional services employees for meals they now receive for free.
Shelburne employees	Review support program (MOU) for employees not able to return to their jobs—may be too generous.
Correctional facilities	Reduce number in province. Don't need three young offender and nine adult institutions.
Management*	Compare numbers of top level management to other departments. Too many supervisors, many incapable of making decisions.
Attendance	Take a stronger stand on abuse of sick leave within the department.
Supervisors	Reduce the number of supervisors in the court system.
Chief Judge *	Require to move from Annapolis Royal to Halifax to reduce expenses.
Market adjustment for lawyers	Eliminate.

* indicates more than one submission

Theme	Recommendation
Institutional abuse victims *	Discontinue compensation program and require alleged victims to seek compensation in court system. Make efforts to recover fraudulent claims. Restructure the counselling program (compensation program—institutional abuse) since few of the claimants are willing to receive counselling.
Shelburne Youth Centre	Do not close—unemployment outside metro Halifax is much higher—jobs are important to the region.
JOIS fees	Increase fee to find out whether someone has a conviction.
District Court Administrators *	1. An employee of the Digby Justice Centre suggested that there was no need for a District Court Administrator. 2. Does the department need both supervisors and DCAs?
Legal services	Privatize.
Adult correctional facilities	Privatize.
Technology	Too many changes (WordPerfect versions, printers)—time consuming to retrain.
Employees accused of abuse	Government should stop "stone-walling" employees of youth institutions who are trying to clear their names. This drags out and adds cost to the process.
Regional Administration Model	Doesn't work well. Staff at courts (Digby or Annapolis Counties, for example) cannot deal with issues as they arise. Previously, staff in the county courts both delivered service and performed administrative roles allowing them to make quick, appropriate decisions.
Expenses *	Excessive travel expenses.

Department of Natural Resources

Theme	Recommendation
Film companies	Charge for using Crown land.
Nurseries	Privatize, but guarantee five years of seedling purchases.

* Indicates more than one submission

Theme	Recommendation
User fees *	Rifle ranges, coyote hunting permits, provincial parks, infilling permits, wharf permits, other services/programs. Could direct some of the money to the Wildlife Habitat Fund.
Mining royalties	The royalties we receive from mining are too modest. For example: Gypsum demand is high but the gypsum tax is very low and should be increased. The revenues from mining royalties should be returned to the Minerals and Energy branch to be used to target new opportunities for development.
Tree breeding centre	Close centre, reduce program but maintain our current seed orchards. Move staff to Truro.
Pest control	Reduce initiatives, but maintain monitoring.
Fire control	Regionalize. Use air surveillance during extreme conditions—get rid of fire towers.
Extension services	Focus on adult education. Centralize the program. Close Middle Musquodoboit and disperse staff.
Annual report	Fewer printed copies.
PSPs	1. Regionalize the remeasurement by using people in the region. 2. Do away with the camp and use motels or longer driving distances.
Parks Division	Stick to mandate. Leave environmental issues to Department of the Environment. Don't compete with private industry. Close money-losing/low-income parks.
Overlap	Between branches—ex., cartography and GIS.
Administration	Corporate Services has increased—it should be reduced.
Conservation officers	Cost-share enforcement federally/provincially.
Crown land stumpage fees *	1. Increase. 2. Put back into management of Crown lands. 3. Decrease fees, but have companies do own silviculture. 4. Have fees cover full cost of silviculture work on Crown lands.

* indicates more than one submission

Theme	Recommendation
Herbicide spray program	Should government do its own?
Monthly mileage allowance	Set minimum. Set criteria.
Vehicles *	1. Lease vehicles. 2. Lease fewer, pay mileage to employees instead—cheaper.
Enforcement program	Reduce enforcement program so that reclassification cost is covered. Reduce CO or ACO numbers.
HR issues	HR efficiencies; take full advantage of casual knowledge; need opportunities for flexible working positions. Consider telecommuting for some staff.
Programs	Prioritize programs and reduce or eliminate some. Stick to mandate. Reconsider grants and assistance programs. Less overlap between programs services.
Management *	1. Too many staff in quasi-management roles—not enough doing grunt work. 2. Compare the management-to-staff ratios in Natural Resources to other departments and also between divisions within the department across divisions. 3. Too much staff dedicated to planning and not enough to doing.
Parks	1. Transfer Provincial Parks to private sector. 2. Close money-losing camping parks. 3. Seek concession operators such as Tim Hortons and charge fees.
Reception/library staff—third floor	Four receptionists—one for the minister, one for the department, one for the library, one for the Registry—plus five people working in a small library. These people should be cross-trained and staff cut in half.
Casuals	Reorganize duties to take advantage of casual knowledge: e.g., casual fire crew in charge of fire duties and suppression, leaving technical staff free to do other jobs.
Conference calls	Instead of traveling to some meetings.

* Indicates more than one submission

Theme	Recommendation
Meetings	Hold "as required" rather than regularly scheduled meetings to save travel costs. Regional meetings often require staff to travel from several offices.
Auto fuel	Buy fuel in bulk by tender. Requires up-front investment in a storage tank but will save in long run.
DNR Extension services	Provide option for Extension staff to deliver forest/wildlife education modules at school sites through an outreach option rather than travel.
Equipment/resources	Centralize control and/or tracking of resources such as equipment, vehicles, machinery, projectors, cameras, etc. Maximize utility of each piece. Reduce theft and loss. Reduce time required to find equipment. Centralize training, repair, and incidence of faulty equipment. Reduce amount of equipment required. Reduce number of meeting rooms required.
Crown aggregate	The new pricing rates in August 2000–2001 and beyond should be increased to levels consistent with 75–85% of private industry costs or current cost per cubic metre could become the per tonne cost (effectively doubling revenue) and all future sales sold on a per tonne basis.
Research	Cut our research budget, but the "Core programs of maintaining the PSP for G and Y should be maintained."
Miscellaneous	1. Crack down on field trips, attendance and upgrading courses. 2. Too many computers. 3. Get rid of voice mail.
Telecommuting	A viable alternative for this department to save office expenses.
Revenue increases	Examine cost-recovery approach and consider privatization of some services.

Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations

Theme	Recommendation
Income Tax collected and HST	Are we getting our fair share from Ottawa? Are provinces without HST receiving a higher percentage of sales tax dollars?
NS government smart card	Registers birth, health card, child ID, school registration, driver's licence, provincial tax, fine payment, marriage/divorce, death and student loan. Provides demographic and health info for planning. Produce reports on health care and education costs. Sell specific information to private sector.

Theme	Recommendation
Budget and operations planning	Worker/management teams for planning and operations including budget preparation.
Amalgamate government services	For example: If a driver/vehicle owner has an outstanding fine, they have to go to the nearest justice facility to pay the fine and return to Access/RMV to complete the transaction.
Photo ID	Issue passport photos from all Access NS offices to generate revenue.
MVIs	We are told that half of front line staff for MVIs will be cut. "Concern is the number of jobs that will be lost if the Vehicle Inspection Program is scrapped." This would leave far too many managers for the remaining staff. Staff can work in self-directed work teams, reducing the need for many managers.
Motor Vehicles *	1. Generate revenue by selling histories of vehicle ownership, such as previous owners, addresses, dates of registration and mileage. 2. Concerned that the RMV office in Baddeck will close.
Close testing stations	Close testing stations in Inverness, Canso, Glace Bay, North Sydney and Cheticamp. Clients would go to Sydney for their tests, reducing staff travel costs, costs of office space and allowing tests to be scheduled more efficiently.
Motor vehicle fees *	1. Implement fees for driver's handbook and written tests. 2. Increase fees for vehicle inspection program and restoration. 3. Increase fee for Vehicle ID number from \$2 to \$5 or \$10. 4. Increase fee for replacement sticker from \$2 to \$5. 5. Implement a minimum charge for handicap permits. 6. Consider introducing a fee for the beginner's test. 7. Apply new fees to services presently provided for free. 8. Increase ATV fee from \$10 to \$25 9. Traffic violations—require driver to pay for Defensive Driving Course, driver counselling and re-exam.
Vehicle registration	Eliminate reminder notices.
Extended hours	Eliminate RMV extended hours.

* indicates more than one submission

Theme	Recommendation
Commercial vehicle enforcement *	1. Keep vehicle compliance stations open and mobile units on the road 24/7 to generate more revenue through fines. 2. Monitor where pro-rated, interprovincial vehicles are "home-based." Are they registered in New Brunswick where the parent company is located, showing on the books as only operating part of the time in Nova Scotia, so the New Brunswick government gets the bulk of the fees, when in actual fact they operate exclusively in Nova Scotia?
Driver training	1. The department should deliver the Defensive Driving Courses, especially those offered for the Graduated Licence exit, now offered through the private sector. There would be a nominal fee, less than the fees customers are paying for private courses. 2. Bring back courses such as 55 Alive to improve senior driving skills and generate revenue.
Driver compliance*	1. Review length of time actually required for each appointment and schedule more efficiently. 2. Eliminate test routes that do not meet minimum elements required for road tests. This would close offices in Ingonish, Inverness and other locations. 3. Driver enhancement officers could deliver "Driving while impaired" program, which was developed by government and taken over by private sector. 4. Consider delivering education to mature drivers and negotiate with insurance companies to recognize the training by reducing rates. 5. Increase education role of driver enforcement officers, especially during "Highway Safety Week" (booths in malls, at seniors expo and trade shows).
Diligent Vehicle Tax recovery program	1. Enforcement. 2. The department could enforce the collection of outstanding vehicle tax. Indicators should be set on clients' records similar to those set for outstanding fines, not allowing any type of transaction for the client until the outstanding taxes are paid.
Fuel and Tobacco Tax	Investigate what other provincial services the federal government will administer for us—specifically, harmonizing the fuel and tobacco and having them administered by the federal government.

* indicates more than one submission

Theme	Recommendation
Access NS offices *	1. Have only one director covering both metro and regional service delivery instead of one director for each. 2. Eliminate managers in Halifax and Dartmouth offices and replace with supervisory program specialists in Consumer and Commercial relations and Motor Vehicles. 3. Examine management positions for the Access NS offices —staff manage themselves and the programs —an office supervisor position and a combining of this function in the metro area are suggested. 4. Collect fines at the counter on behalf of the court system. 5. Have front-line staff note number of requests for oral beginner tests to indicate likelihood of success with Internet/kiosks for service delivery.
Nova Scotia Business Registry	This department needs to assess whether we are throwing good money after bad—in particular, licence + system.
Directors	1. Combine metro and regional directors into one position. Allow managers to make more decisions. 2. Projects are often initiated at front-line level and get stalled at director level. Seen as bottleneck to improvements.
Policy staff	1. Reduce policy staff and make it the remaining staff's mandate to assist program staff in reviews undertaken by them in respect to research and format. 2. There are insufficient resources for program delivery while there are considerable resources for central functions such as policy and communications. Some of these functions should be shelved —more important for front line delivery than newsletters and reviews.
Consumer Proposal Program	Devote more resources to this program because it is a revenue-generating program that provides tangible assistance to consumers.
Tax collection	Consider having the federal government take over more tax collection duties. For example: Fuel Tax or Tobacco Tax. The federal government may be able to absorb some of the provincial workers displaced.
NSBR system	Concern was expressed about the amount of money spent to get the system running and whether the business case warrants future costs.

* indicates more than one submission

Theme	Recommendation
Residential Tenancies—general *	1. Introduce an Agreement to Attempt Mediation as part of the application process. 2. Staff are underutilized—return acting officers to their original clerk positions. 3. Staff in the metro RT program are underutilized and this should be addressed. 4. There are over 30,000 rental units in CB necessitating keeping the Residential Tenancies program. 5. The RT program should be examined. Should we continue to offer such a program, which is primarily a debt collection tool for landlords? 6. Exclude unpaid rent from the (dispute resolution) process and let landlords collect their debts like other businesses. 7. If we retain the program, look to make it cost-recoverable by charging landlords a reasonable amount for unpaid rent complaints; or institute a security deposit program.
Residential Tenancies—fees *	1. Increase application fee from \$10 to \$25. 2. Increase fee to cover full costs. 3. Introduce appeal fee of \$75. 4. Charge \$20 for enforcement orders (\$10 goes to the courts and we keep the rest). 5. Charge \$1 for copies of the act. 6. Do only one of: offer leases for sale at \$1 or offer free on the Internet.
Residential Tenancies—security deposits	1. Security deposits should be maintained by government. 2. Clerks who are currently acting officers could administer the deposits for government. 3. Deposits would be invested and the interest would be directed to provide mediation services for those who can't pay. 4. The amount of the deposit should be a flat \$300.
Nova Scotia Geomatics Centre	Review operational efficiency and consider privatization.

* Indicates more than one submission

Department of Transportation and Public Works

Theme	Recommendation
Department needs clear direction	Develop relevant policies, procedures and highway maintenance standards that match funding levels.
Single-entry payroll—CUPE	Enter info once, rather than twice as is currently the practice.
Add "working foreman" in field	1. Working foreman (or crew chief) is required for highway maintenance crews—to ensure productivity and safety. 2. May be able to reduce number of area managers.
Combine construction and maintenance divisions	Employ a year-round work force by combining two areas.
Warranties	All contracted work should be warrantied by the contractor; currently no obligation on contractor to go back and repair any deficiencies which show up after the project is complete.
Do not cut front-line staff	In recent years, it is the front-line staff who have been hit hardest by budget cuts. Cutting front-line personnel means service deteriorates.
Equipment purchasing policy—Miller Lake	Miller Lake staff should take recommendation for purchasing equipment from the field, rather than simply purchasing the cheapest equipment.
Redesign construction and maintenance	Employ life-cycle strategy program to enable better planning and budgeting.
Public highways and revenue acts	Improve adherence to acts re: use of revenues from diesel and gasoline fuels, licensing fees, and motor vehicle inspection infractions.
Departmental permits	Monitor compliance of permits.
Maintenance and construction projects	1. Incorporate design techniques for surface and subsurface drainage based on a 100-year peak flow return. 2. Increase performance bonding of new construction to three years. 3. Use low-cost techniques for erosion/siltation control.

Theme	Recommendation
Training and certification	1. Highway engineers and operations supervisors should be trained in basic hydrology. 2. Provide certification program on erosion/siltation for construction contractors.
Environmental services	ES should consist of research, policy and field—like US DOTs.
Policies and procedures	Law and liabilities associated with assessment and management of department's operations should be reviewed by solicitor. Management Manual 23 needs complete overhaul.
Salt contamination	Methods of clearing roads use excessive salt.
80-20 rule (trucking)	Eliminate rule; it adds a substantial and unnecessary cost to construction and maintenance of highways.
Middle management numbers increasing	In past year, noted that TPW has been increasing middle management layers; should be concentrating on front-line staff who deliver the services.
Centralized control and empire building	Noted that TPW is returning to old system of management; front-line staff are losing level of responsibility to new middle management.
Video conference network	TPW could reduce travel costs by establishing video conferencing networks in districts.
Winter service delivery	1. Winter service delivery is highly overdone on secondary/local roads. 2. Propose significant reductions to timing of winter service and service delivery methods based on current weather patterns, better products and real time weather and road condition information. 3. Invest in Road Weather Information Stations (RWIS), related telemetry and updated snow and ice control equipment that moves toward anti-icing strategy.
Miller Lake—Mechanical Branch	1. Current financial and staffing structure does not foster fiscal responsibility. 2. Make the branch financially responsible for its own operation rather than charging back any inefficiencies and "screw-ups" to the areas it serves.
Front-line staff	Migration of accounting functions to field should translate to reduction in accounting staff in area and district offices, and corresponding upgrading of position scopes of front-line staff.

Theme	Recommendation
IT support	IT support is critical; should be a government-wide function/support service, with more attention to geography than departmental lines.
Political interference	Remove political interference in capital program.
Privatization	1. Experimentation with tendered snow removal equipment has led to prices almost double departmental costs. 2. Tendered pavement patching is bid at prices about 50% over what department can do.
Licences, Permits and Approvals (LPAs)	1. What happened to LPA initiative? 2. Should be operating on a cost-recovery basis.
Climate for business	Government is not a lending institution; provide the climate and infrastructure that business needs.
Policy—woodlot access on 100-series highways	Contractors and trucking firms cause rutting to roads, block ditches, and leave debris within road limits; TPW must repair damage. Need a policy, formal process that includes fee and deposits.
Winter/summer maintenance cycle	Start budget cycle at the beginning of winter operations season; currently district operations limits the amount of summer maintenance to ensure adequate money for snow removal and ice control.
Public affairs/administration	Given reduced funding levels, PA could consider sharing administrative resources with another division.
Road builders	We should be asking road builders to come to us with creative ways to help build and maintain infrastructure.
Contracting out highway work will not save money	Minimal waste exists; payroll reduced to half what it was 10 years ago; garages run like private industry; staff are tasked with multiple duties.
Financing options	We should be preparing options for consideration by government; e.g., construction of toll roads.
Department of Health	DOH should work with insurance industry and Workers Compensation to make better use of hospital facilities/resources after traditional hours. In other jurisdictions, disability insurers pay significant user fees for access to resources, such as MRIs, for speedier diagnosis, treatment and return to work for clients. Can TPW use this kind of service with its LTD insurer?

Theme	Recommendation
Operations planning	While business plans are developed annually, they are (quite expected to be) at a high level of detail and do not allow time/focus on division-specific activities, or coordination of activities across divisions. Once the reductions are finalized and we see what is remaining, we may want to extend the business planning process to an operations level. I believe it will help to: "take stock" of remaining infrastructure, (perhaps) kick-start some new service delivery methods, and sustain the structures left in place. (We have begun this process with IT, and other divisions have shown interest.)
Combine all transportation vehicles under one department.	All publicly owned vehicles can be purchased and looked after by one group; reduces required work force.
Sell government-owned golf courses	Sell the courses at a fair market value and apply the money directly to the debt.
Joint federal-provincial organization eliminates duplication and maximizes resources	This is an innovative solution to federal/provincial harmonization issues.
Highways	Don't neglect highway maintenance.

Treasury and Policy Board

Theme	Recommendation
Oracle	Acquire corporate licence.
GroupWise	Centralize GW licence purchase and maintenance at TSS. Re-bill departments quarterly.
Business solutions	Government business solutions must have a strategic outlook and no longer be regarded as mechanical operations.

Corporate and General Recommendations

Theme	Recommendation
Five-year plan	Take five years to balance the books rather than two. Early retirement, attrition will take care of staffing levels.
Public consultations	Avoid repetitive consultations on same issue.
Agencies/boards/commissions	Eliminate those that serve little purpose except to provide stipends to patronage appointments, including the Voluntary Planning Board itself.
Big budget departments	Focus on Health/Education for cost reduction.
Program review	Publish information on programs are ranked as part of the review process.
Communications	Procurement of goods and services needs to be streamlined. Should not have to go through Communications Nova Scotia and pay extra charge.
Year-end spending	Change budgeting so that departments don't feel compelled to use up budget at year-end.
Rumors of layoffs	These rumors are contributing to lower productivity and bad morale. The government should address these concerns ASAP to end the fear and stress caused by the uncertainty.
Service amalgamation	Example: Outstanding fine prevents vehicle transaction, client goes to Justice to pay fine, must return to Access/RMV to complete transaction.
Equalization/transfer payments	Negotiate with Ottawa for an increase. Should be proportional to our improved economic performance.
Postal services	Out source.
Social programs	Provide temporary assistance—not way of life.
Program review	Thoroughly review one department per year rather than trying to do all at one time.
Privatization	Doesn't save money—don't do it.

Theme	Recommendation
Budgets *	1. Penalize departments that go over. 2. Take longer view than five-year mandate. 3. Reduce cost, not staff. 4. Public education/consultation on effects of budget cuts. 5. Worker/management teams.
Retirement *	1. Offer early retirement package. 2. Offer top-up for those already eligible. 3. Eliminate double-dipping—rehiring of retirees. 4. Offer five-year plan—employee pays two years, government pays three. 5. Allow employees to use accumulated public service award to fund early retirement. 6. Reduced retirement package for women—breaks in their employment were without the benefit of leave for childbirth and, at the time, daycare was not available.
Pension surplus	In favour of future pension refunds—they are both good for employees and return money to government.
EDO	Eliminate.
Unpaid leave *	1. Voluntary only. 2. Mandatory for employees earning over \$30,000.
Layoffs *	1. Decide who stays based on merit. 2. Decision should be made by outside consultant—not the employee's boss. 3. Two- or three-year phase-out/retraining of non-essential staff. 4. Privatize some functions but guarantee two years' employment with new employer. Improve viability of business by funding startup, transfer equipment, guarantee several years' contracts.
NS savings bonds	Keep debt in province.
Employee suggestions *	1. Encourage early identification of issues/problems. 2. Give rewards such as time off.

* indicates more than one submission

Theme	Recommendation
Management *	1. Too much management. 2. Stop creating new management positions. 3. Reduce layers. 4. Pay attention to audits that recommend reducing management. 5. Stop management taking time off as "overtime"—not supposed to be compensated for overtime. 6. Don't create management positions just to relocate managers who have not worked out in their current positions.
Lunch meetings*	1. Reduce lunch meetings. 2. Eliminate non-itemized inventories which prevent Finance from identifying costs usually related to elaborate and unnecessary luncheon meetings.
Free coffee/donuts at meetings	Eliminate.
Parking*	No paid/subsidized parking.
Office furniture*	Stop purchase of new furniture for management every two years.
Tendering	Stop splitting invoices to avoid tendering.
Bonuses	No bonuses to management.
Home use	Excessive expensive equipment such as computers, printers for managers home use.
Equipment quality	No top-of-the-line equipment for managers who do not really require it—i.e., those who only use GroupWise.
Newspapers	Limit number of free ones in government offices.
Conferences *	1. Too many managers attending. 2. Too many staff attending.
Masters degrees *	1. Offer to fewer people. 2. Don't offer to those close to retirement. 3. Make participants sign service agreements.

* indicates more than one submission

Theme	Recommendation
Office renovations	Only when long-term lease is in place.
Paid housing for deputy ministers	Eliminate.
Vending machines	In government offices to raise money.
Protocol office gifts	Offer for sale on the government website.
NS Bookstore	Put catalogue on the Internet.
Research service	Similar to what Stats Can does. Offer data for sale. Headquarter service in Finance.
Deficit surtax	On income and aimed at reducing our debt.
Surplus goods *	1. Track in a database. Refer to before purchasing. 2. Sell surplus computers and office equipment. 3. Trade surplus parts for ones we need.
Pay stubs/pay memos *	Send electronically.
Speaking engagements/lectures	Government employees should charge when requested to do these and return proceeds to government.
Electricity *	1. Turn off lights/computers at night. 2. Switched lights in walled offices, storage rooms, etc. 3. Low-energy bulbs. 4. Retrofitting government buildings can potentially save millions in energy costs—the Energy Utilization section of Department of Natural Resources can provide information on heating and lighting alternatives.
Heat *	1. Use programmable thermostats. 2. Make thermostats tamper-proof.
Ordering parts/supplies	Aggregate orders and fax/phone in together.

* indicates more than one submission

Theme	Recommendation
Office accommodations *	1. Less expensive space. 2. Move some offices out of downtown core. 3. Fewer walled offices. 4. More telecommuting. 5. All in one building—share services more.
Auto parts/accessories for government vehicles	1. Negotiate for best price on gas, oil, windshield washer, etc. 2. Use self-serve gas.
Motels	Negotiate for best rate with a chain of hotels—have government employees stay there when traveling.
Standing offers	Should not have to follow up with a fax request. A phone call should be sufficient.
Christmas tree for Boston	Discontinue.
Attendance	Rewards for low absentee rates.
Expense claims/petty cash	Forward to appropriate offices for distribution.
Air miles	Take advantage of air miles programs and accumulate for government travel purposes.
Stationery *	1. Tighten controls. 2. Keep under its own cost centre. 3. Buy all supplies through stock room.
Cell phones *	Too many in use.
Training *	1. Make sure it is necessary for the person's job. 2. Give permanent staff preference over casual.
Out-source staff	To non-government organizations during slack periods to recover costs.
Holiday office hours *	1. Close offices over holidays. 2. Don't hire temps—have regular employees provide adequate service.

* indicates more than one submission

Theme	Recommendation
Travel *	1. Eliminate unnecessary travel. 2. Don't allow travel expenses to be used as income supplement. 3. Use car pooling to attend meetings/conferences. 4. Don't put casuals in jobs that require travel. 5. Verify that those who receive travel/car allowance actually use car for work. 6. Eliminate monthly car allowance—pay straight mileage. 7. Car pool in Halifax/Kentville/Truro triangle. 8. Encourage "over Saturday" air travel. 9. No non-refundable air tickets. 10. Temporary ban on out-of-province travel until deficit solved. 11. Don't reimburse meals at 100%.
Government autos *	1. Eliminate leased cars. 2. Lease inexpensive cars. 3. Eliminate car allowance for cabinet members.
Printing	1. Use templates rather than pre-printed forms. 2. Establish government-wide service, amalgamate Education's printing service with Young St. mainframe printing service.
Temporary vacancies (maternity leave, etc.)	Return funds to general use rather than keeping within division.
Juried expenditures	Create panels to review expenditures over a certain amount (ex., \$2500) to assess for general value to government. Ideally would be multi-departmental.
Amalgamation	Integrate similarly themed functions—ex., production, marketing, inspection, enforcement.
Subsidies *	Subsidize industries rather than individual businesses. Don't subsidize business at all.
Telephone directories	Are we ordering too many printed directories? Eliminate excessive use of operator service for local/long distance numbers. Can we look up numbers on the Internet instead?
Telephone services	Centralize the ordering of phone sets, lines, etc. in each department.

* indicates more than one submission

Theme	Recommendation
Employee benefits *	1. Cost share at 50/50 2. Make some optional to save government share.
Retraining	Encourage education leave for employees who want to leave public sector for private but lack required skills. This is preferable to layoffs.
Labour market and career services	Merge labour market and career-related services across government (Educ., Econ. Dev., Comm. Serv., Labour Market Secretariat and possibly with HRDC) in policy, training and financial assistance, etc.
Conservation—reduce, recycle, reuse.	Buy recycled printer cartridges. Don't buy new items like staplers just because a new model is nicer. Print on both sides of paper. Circulate memos rather than making copies.
Mail/couriers *	1. Maximize use of electronic mail. 2. Direct deposit for all payments. 3. If there is regular courier traffic to another office try to save and send in batches.
Maintain government employees	For subject matter expertise, for advice, direction and policy development for both public and private sector resourcing—to represent government in negotiations with industry, other jurisdictions and user groups. To legislate, inspect, enforce and provide confidential services and do public education. Institute user pay where applicable and/or impose a levy on business to provide the above services.
Government management should consist of	• Policy planners responsible for determining political will, painting the big picture and long-term planning • Front line responsible for channeling info to public and back to planners and responding to public needs.
Budget	1. Stop squeezing small budget departments like Fisheries that always stay within budget and go after big budget departments. 2. Reward employees for under-spending their portion of budget.
Training	Should be reviewed to increase revenues and cut costs.
Standing offer	Can sometimes purchase items much cheaper at other retail outlets. Review purchasing process.

* indicates more than one submission

Theme	Recommendation
Accountability	Eliminate the abuse of cell phones, expense accounts, car allowances, training, unnecessary travel and overtime.
New phones	The old ones worked fine.
Credit cards	Some service stations will not accept because they don't have a magnetic strip.
Meal allowance	Per diem is too low.
Program review	1. Electronic newsletter updating staff on any review process within the department as a result of budget review/planning. 2. Minister should meet with executive directors regarding program review and should communicate with staff more.
Acting pay	Ensure those receiving are performing all or most of the position's duties.
Implication of cuts	Determine long-term implications. Determine if only portions of programs can be cut, maintain other portions by introducing user fees. Phase out/retrain non-essential staff over two to three years. Monitor staff performance and retain qualified staff who can move operations forward.
Internet/telephone provider	Tender for services for whole department.
Unfilled positions	If they have been vacant for a period of time, then cut them.
Programs—general	Identify and eliminate workflow bottlenecks. Specifically, there are many projects and activities of the front line that have support from the director, that stall at the director's level.
Reduce costs	Avoid staff and program cuts.
Voluntary leave without pay, except at Christmas.	Mandatory three-day leave without pay at Christmas (between the holidays) when very little work is actually done.
Eliminate fortnight travel expenses.	Compensate based upon the exact number of kilometres traveled, instead of a monthly travel allowance.
Wages and expenses	Review policies respecting acting pay and allowable expenses.

Theme	Recommendation
Information and records management	The Government Records Advocacy committee (GRAC) recommends that government commit to records management principles and better records management systems. Some of the benefits include more efficient operation of government, enhanced privacy of information, better service delivery to public, and easier response to FOI/POP requests.
Retirement	1. Offer a graduated exit program whereby employees work reduced hours but earn full pensionable years for last two years leading up to retirement eligibility. 2. Recalculate the retirement formula for 75 rather than 80.
Career change	Allow public servants to enter private sector employment on unpaid leave.